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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <http://commerce.senate.gov>

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June 21, 2017

The Honorable Ajit V. Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street Southwest
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

The Federal Communications Commission's continuous work to marshal spectrum with the goal of improving broadband service yields enormous benefits to our country: economic growth, leadership in innovation, and the innumerable benefits of faster, better internet connectivity for all Americans. Beyond voice and data connectivity for individuals, wireless broadband powers telehealth, connected cars, smart communities, and supply chain management. As these demands increase, more spectrum resources are required.

While the U.S. has pushed ahead with efforts to free new spectrum at both low and high frequencies, we lag behind other countries in so-called "mid-band" spectrum—the range of frequencies between 3GHz and 7 GHz. Europe, China, Japan, and South Korea are all moving ahead to allocate hundreds of megahertz of mid-band spectrum, for licensed and unlicensed uses, in anticipation of both new Internet of Things applications as well as rising demand for mobile broadband that can be met with small cell deployments.

One way government can help augment the U.S.'s global leadership position is by looking for ways to encourage innovation and investment. To help achieve this goal, I introduced the MOBILE NOW Act to ensure that large swaths of wireless spectrum, including spectrum in the mid-band range, are made available for commercial use by the year 2020. For the U.S. to remain competitive as we see the rollout of the next generation gigabit wireless services, including 5G, more spectrum must be made available to keep pace with ever-increasing demand.

While I am hopeful that the Senate will pass the bipartisan MOBILE NOW Act in the very near future, I am pleased to hear that the Commission may be considering a new proceeding to identify new spectrum uses in a range of bands. As you look for ways to better utilize spectrum, I urge you to explore possible new allocations in the mid-band frequencies, perhaps including the 3.7 GHz and 6 GHz bands, and to begin a rulemaking proceeding focused on opening mid-band spectrum for both licensed and unlicensed networks.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your ongoing efforts to implement sensible, forward-looking spectrum policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Thune", with a stylized, flowing script.

JOHN THUNE
Chairman



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

July 18, 2017

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
254 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

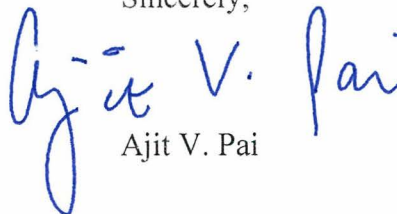
Dear Chairman Thune:

Thank you for your letter supporting the Commission's efforts to bring more spectrum to market for commercial use in the mid-frequency bands. I appreciate your efforts to ensure U.S. leadership in deployment of next-generation services. I agree that improving broadband services yields enormous benefits to our country, and it is important for the Commission to continue to implement forward looking spectrum policies to keep pace with increasing demand and to encourage innovations and investments.

As you note, in the United States, the mid-band frequencies historically have not received as much attention as low- or high-frequency spectrum. Moreover, there has been a growing interest in mid-band spectrum from industry and others because it offers a balance of coverage and capacity that could provide a critical input in the development of next-generation wireless services. For these reasons, I have asked my colleagues at the Commission's August Open Meeting to initiate a new inquiry into opportunities for next-generation services—particularly wireless broadband services—in the spectrum range of 3.7 GHz to 24 GHz. This inquiry will be conducted in close coordination with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, and will focus on exploring opportunities in the mid-band frequencies for expanded flexible use. This inquiry will also explore long-term strategies the Commission can pursue to promote expanded spectrum access to meet the growing demand.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Ajit" and last name "Pai" being more prominent than the middle initial "V".

Ajit V. Pai